



FIRST PERSON Small Business Improved My Life



Kaidanym (on the left) with a customer at her new store in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
Photo: DLGP

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Kaidanym Abdramanova, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Kaidanym Abdramanova was going through some rough times: she lost her job, the family was living in a small dormitory room, and her husband was sick. To survive, Kaydanym started baking pastries for sale. With her first savings, the woman rented a small piece of land from the city and set up a stall where she was selling her baked goods.

One time, as she was paying rent for her allotment, Kaidanym noticed an announcement about a land lease tender. She decided to try her luck and see if she can purchase a lot to build a food shop. Kaidanym won against three other participants of the tender and signed a five-year lease agreement with the mayor's office for 30 square meters of land. To finance construction, she received a bank credit, and by the summer of 2007, the shop opened its doors to customers. The sales are robust, people come to buy at Kaidanym's store even from other parts of the town.

Thanks to Kaidanym's income, her family is also enjoying better days. Kaidanym and her husband bought an apartment, and their three children are going to school. Kaidanym is already planning further expansion: she recently participated in an auction and bought a 60 square meter lot to build yet another store. “Today anyone can lease or purchase land from the city and start their own business. This makes our life get better,” says Kaidanym.

Kaidanym is one of many thousands of citizens who recovered from poverty and unemployment thanks to USAID local governance project. The project works in all 25 cities and 136 rural municipalities of Kyrgyzstan to increase effectiveness, transparency, and citizen participation in the areas of budgeting, municipal property management, and strategic planning for local economic development. It has already supported over 200 local infrastructure and social projects that benefited more than 750,000 residents across the country.